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March 6, 1975

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MEMORANDUM TO: File

FROM: Robert Olsen *RO*

SUBJECT: Interview of March 4, 1975, with E. Howard Hunt
and his Daughter, Lisa Hunt

The interview commenced at approximately 4:00 PM and was conducted at 712 Jackson Place.

Mr. Hunt is presently residing at 1245 N. E. 82th Street, Miami, Florida 33138. He has a silent telephone number of 305 758-6159.

Lisa Hunt resides at 3406 Nimitz Road, Apt. A-2, Kensington, Maryland 20795. She has an unlisted telephone number which she declined to give us. She was born on March 9, 1951.

The interview concerned allegations that Mr. Hunt was involved in the assassination of President John Kennedy and other public figures. He is aware of the public statements made by Dick Gregory and Ralph Schoenman in early February 1975 relative to his being involved in the assassination of President Kennedy. He states that most of the information that Mr. Gregory and Mr. Schoenman referred to is drawn from a book by Tad Szulc entitled, E. Howard Hunt, the Compulsive Spy. Hunt states that the book is saturated with errors. One of those errors is the claim that Hunt was Chief of Station in Mexico City in the fall of 1963.

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The Bay of Pigs Background

Hunt states that in 1960 he was assigned to the job of organizing a "government in exile" for Cuba among Cuban exiles in Florida. The plan adopted by the National Security Council under President Eisenhower called for the formation and training of a brigade of Cuban exiles who would invade Cuba, establish a provisional government, receive recognition by the United States and overthrow the Castro government. The brigade had its own air force and was otherwise fully equipped by the United States Government. The operation, however, was not supposed to be one involving United States Government participation. The venture was to involve training and launching from outside the United States.

In connection with his political activity and the organization of the government in exile, Hunt went to Mexico in 1960. Shortly thereafter the Mexican government demanded that they leave and he returned to the United States. Richard Nixon, then Vice President, was working closely with the CIA on the project.

When President Kennedy was elected in November 1960, he was briefed on the project and confirmed the plans, including the plan to provide air cover to the invading Cuban force. In early 1961, however, the Kennedy administration decided that the political organization of the Cuban government in exile would have to be broadened so as to include all elements of the Cuban society. Even radical leftwingers were to be included. Hunt was assigned the job of convincing the leaders of the Cuban community to accept such a broadening of the political structure of the government in exile. Hunt found this to be an impossible job to accomplish because the Cubans recruited to make up the invasion force had been promised that the government in exile would be solidly anti-Castro and anti-communist. Hunt asked to be relieved of his assignment because he thought it was an impossible one to achieve and he returned to Washington to work on propaganda and similar non-political aspects of the forthcoming invasion.

Within twenty-four hours prior to the time that the Cuban brigade was to hit the beaches at the Bay of Pigs, President Kennedy made two critical decisions that affected the final outcome: he cancelled plans

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for an airstrike on Cuba which would have destroyed the six remaining combat planes that were available to Castro; second, the order that there be no air cover for the invading brigade. The result was that the invading force was chopped up while it was still in the water; the ships carrying the armored vehicles were sunk, as were the supply ships, and the troops were left abandoned on the shore. The remnant of the Cuban Air Force was entirely adequate to demolish the invasion fleet.

Hunt concedes that he was bitter about the decisions made by President Kennedy, but he primarily blames Arthur Schlesinger, Adlai Stevenson and Robert Kennedy for advising the President to follow the course he chose. He particularly feels that the Cubans had been recruited with certain promises and that those promises were withdrawn at the last minute. Hunt says, in fact, that the decision not to make the airstrike and not to provide air cover was made after the invasion fleet had arrived at the point of no return, i. e., when radio communication to the invasion fleet had already terminated for security reasons.

After the Bay of Pigs disaster, Hunt worked with Allen Dulles until early 1962 at which time Dulles was replaced as DCI. In January 1962, Hunt was assigned to the Domestic Operations Division of the Deputy Directorate for Plans. He was involved in handling proprietaries based in the United States, which have their impact abroad. His immediate superior was Stanley Gaines, who was either Chief of Operations or Executive Officer of the Domestic Operations Division and Tracy Barnes, who was Division Chief of DOD (Barnes is a cousin by marriage to Vice President Rockefeller.)

The proprietaries which Hunt was engaged in managing were [Continental Press] which prepared news and radio broadcasts for foreign use; 24 [Allied-Pacific Publishing Company] [of Bombay] which was engaged in publishing [textbooks for Indian schools; the Rome Daily American], 24 a cover operation; and Fodor's Travel Guides, a proprietary which Hunt questions as to whether it had any use. (Fodor's had been set up in 1946 as a cover operation but served no apparent use during the years Hunt was with DOD.

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The headquarters for the DOD was at 1717 H Street, N.W., in Washington, D. C., and then later it was on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Hunt's assignment with DOD lasted until the spring of 1965.

During the period from January 1962 until 1965, he states that he never traveled to Mexico or any other Latin American country. His first trip to Mexico after 1961 was in 1970, when he traveled there for the Mullen Company after his retirement from the CIA.

Hunt's Whereabouts on November 22, 1963

Hunt states that he had never been in Dallas until 1971, with a possible exception of a change of planes on his way to Mexico with his family in 1960. He does not recall whether that change of planes took place in Dallas or in Houston. In any event, he and his family never left the airport on that occasion.

He has never had any contact, directly or indirectly, with Lee Harvey Oswald, Jack Ruby or anyone else thought to have been associated with the assassination of the President.

He was never in New Orleans in 1963 and has never had anything whatever to do with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, which he identifies as a communist organization.

During the period from January 1962 to 1965, he traveled once or twice per year to India, two or three times per year to Paris, once or twice per year to London, and, during that period, he traveled two or three times to Rome. His only domestic travel in 1963 was between Washington and New York. All travel, whether domestic or international, was in his own name.

Hunt states that in 1961 he used the pseudonym of Edward J. Hamilton in connection with his work on the Cuban project in Florida. With the exception of that pseudonym and the pseudonym he used on the identification papers provided him for the Ellsberg break in, he has never used a pseudonym.

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On November 22, 1963, he and his wife were driving on H Street at about 9th in Washington, D. C., when he turned the car radio on and learned that the President had been shot. He and Mrs. Hunt had been shopping in a Chinese grocery store in that immediate vicinity, immediately prior to their getting into the car. The Hunts lived at 5215 Balton Road, Sumner, Maryland. On their way home they drove to the Sidwell Friends school on upper Wisconsin Avenue and picked up their younger daughter, Kevan. Kevan told them that Robert and Courtenay Kennedy, children of Attorney General Robert Kennedy, were students in the same school and had been picked up by the Secret Service. The children in the school knew that the President had been shot.

Mr. Hunt states that the following persons are witnesses to the fact that he was here in Washington, D. C., at the time the President was shot in Dallas:

1. His son, Howard St. John Hunt, then ten years of age.
2. His daughter, Lisa, then twelve years of age.
3. His daughter, Kevan, then eleven years of age.
4. The family maid, Mary Trayner, now employed by a family living at 4806 DeRussey Parkway, Chevy Chase, Maryland, and whose phone number is 652-2930.

Mr. Hunt believes that he was either taking the day off from work as a part of annual leave on November 22, 1963, or he may have been recuperating from a hospitalization for ulcers. He had been hospitalized at about that period at Sibley Hospital in Washington, D. C.

Mr. Hunt states that he held the following oil company charge account and credit cards in 1963 and that such accounts may provide corroboration as to his presence in Washington, D. C., on November 22, 1963: Esso Oil, Gulf Oil, Texaco Oil, Cities Service Oil, Brooks Brothers (New York), Garfinkle's, Woodward and Lothrop, Sears Roebuck & Co., Hecht Co. He also states that telephone records might be checked with

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Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co.; that the CIA might have travel voucher records showing his travel during that year and that CIA should also have records on the dates on which he took sick leave or annual leave.

Mr. Hunt categorically denies that he has been involved in any way whatsoever with the assassination of President Kennedy, Senator Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, or any other person either within or without the United States. He similarly denies any participation or involvement whatever in the attempted assassination of Governor Wallace, the disappearance of Congressman Hale Boggs or the shooting of Senator Stennis.

He states that in connection with the planning for the Cuban invasion in 1961, he did suggest that Fidel Castro should be assassinated either before or contemporaneously with that invasion, but his suggestion was not acted upon or otherwise approved.

Attached are copies of a press statement made by Mr. Hunt in early February 1975 in Florida, in which he denies the allegations made by Dick Gregory and others with respect to his involvement in the assassination of President Kennedy and a letter written to Mr. Hunt by the former family maid, Mary Traynor.

Lisa Hunt confirms her father's account that he was at home with the family in the afternoon and evening of November 22, 1963. She recalls that her father assembled the family in front of the television set. He wanted them all to watch the program because it was an important historical matter. They were all shocked about the assassination of the President.

cc: D. Belin
Senior Counsels

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The allegations made by Dick Gregory and others connecting me to the murder of President John Kennedy are totally without foundation. They constitute a false and vicious libel.

These charges are bizarre products of sick minds. The Political Left has never been able or willing to accept the fact that Kennedy's assassin was a man of the Left; thus the Leftist preoccupation with finding an alternate assassin.

Dick Gregory's smear represents the ultimate in slander and innuendo customarily characterized as McCarthyism.

The Rockefeller and other investigative committees will probably examine Gregory's charges - as indeed they should. For my part I would welcome a thorough high-level investigation and a full airing of all relevant findings. Only if this takes place will I have any hope of clearing my name and living free from the threats against my life already made by neurotics.

I was not in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963; in fact I never visited Dallas until eight years later. I did not meet Frank Sturgis until 1972, nine years after we were allegedly together in Dallas. I was not in Mexico in 1963, and I did not meet Lee Harvey Oswald there or at any other place or time. Moreover, I shared the nation's grief over the murder of our President. These are the facts.

Until authoritative investigative bodies make known their judgment concerning my alleged involvement in the Kennedy murder I will continue to bring libel actions against any and all parties who repeat the libel. I must take this course because the libels are prejudicial to my position before the Court now considering my Appeal from the Watergate affair. And because the libels threaten my only means of livelihood, as a writer. But of even greater concern to me is that continued publicity given to these reckless charges could stimulate some yet-unpublicized maniac into violent action against me and my family.

ADVICE AND WAIVER

Place 712 Adams St
Date 1/31/75
Time 3:30 PM

Before you make any statement to, or answer any questions from, the Commission or its investigators, you should understand that you have the right to remain silent. If you choose to answer, anything you say can be used against you in court.

You may consult a lawyer for advice before any questions are put, and may have a lawyer with you during questioning. If you cannot afford a lawyer, one will be appointed for you before questioning if you wish. If you decide to answer questions without a lawyer present, you still have the right to stop answering at any time; or you may defer your answer until you talk to a lawyer.

WAIVER

I have read and understand the foregoing advice. I am willing to make a statement and answer questions ~~[with]~~ [without] a lawyer at this time. No promises or threats have been made to me, and no pressure or coercion of any kind has been used against me.

Signed [Signature]

Witness: [Signature]

Witness: _____

Time: _____

4806 De Russy Park
Chevy Chase Md 20015
Feb 6 1976

Dear Mr Hunt

I am so glad you thought
writing to me. I remember the day President
Kennedy was shot very well, and I certainly
remember you were there.

If you recall, Mrs Hunt's Aunt
Niece, (I am sorry I can't remember her last name)
in Chicago was staying with you for a few
days, and on the Friday Mrs Hunt, her Aunt,
and the three children were going downtown
to a movie matinee. When Veronica Moppet
called from the Spanish Embassy to tell Mr Hunt
that the President had been shot. I remember
all stood around and stared at each other
and you put the television on, and the
first thing we heard was the news man saying
that it was now 45 minutes since the shot
had been fired, and that they still did
not know how badly he had been injured.

I know that Mrs Hunt's Aunt is
now dead, but it is possible that
when she went back to Chicago she
may have mentioned that you were
there when the news came through to
her daughter (Mrs Hunt's cousin Phyllis).
Although she might not remember it,
she just may be able to corroborate
your story too.

I can of course remember lots
more details. It was ~~the~~ the sort
of day that stays in your mind.

I hope you are still getting
along well. Did you manage to sell
the house on River Rd?

Let me know if there
is anything I can do for you.

If you should run across
Miss Stella remember me to her.

Please give my regards to
the children,

Sincerely,

P.S. My phone
is 652-2930.

I am always yours in affection, Mary